In this Issue......

Club Meeting Dates for 1995

11th January 1995	8th February 1995
8th March 1995	12th April 1995
10th May 1995	14th June 1995
12th July 1995	9th August 1995
13th September 1995	11th October 1995
8th November 1995	13th December 1995

Club meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, 7.30 pm., at the Nunawading Civic Centre in the Courtyard Room.
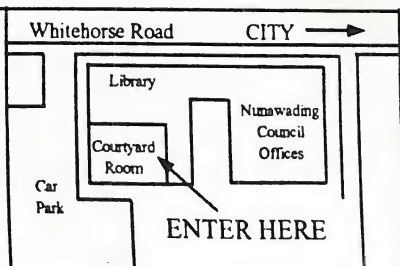
Fancy a cuppa?

Tea and coffee is available free of charge at each meeting in the kitchen, which is opposite the entrance.

Please help yourself and when finished it would be appreciated if you would wash, dry and put away your cup. Thank you.

For this month's demonstraition Elaine Foster will be showing us "Something Better Than Basic".

A Chat with the President

Hello again.

This month I have done more with the computer than I have managed for a while. But not much has been just idly mucking around. It has mostly been things that I have been promising myself I would get around to soon - some of them dating back many months!

There has been the writing of a review of LOADSTAR Issue 131, which of course means becoming fairly familiar with the contents of LOADSTAR 131. I suppose that means just a tiny bit of mucking around - after all you have to see if the games are any good! I hope that it will be of interest to someone out there who is wondering about subscribing to LOADSTAR, or someone who already has it and hasn't had time to look at it yet (this happens to me on occasion - a backlog of newly arrived software which just sits there until I have an hour to spare).

Talking of which, I finally got around to ordering some of the geoClub's public domain GEOS disks, out of a choice of around 350 disks. I couldn't decide what to get - even the catalog disk is frighteningly large - so I eventually just asked for a single months release (10 sides on 5 disks at $2.00 a disk). This particular selection is mostly pictures, but I like to collect good artwork in GEOS format, and there are also a few utilities for me to explore. Of course I recommend you contact and join geoClub if you ever use GEOS, if only for all the cheap software. The man to contact is Peter Hunt - 70 Betula Street, Doveton, Vic., 3177. Send $10.00 for a years subscription. Meanwhile, any GEOS public domain software I get will be available in the MCCC PD library as well.

We are having all sorts of problems getting Commodore Network magazine delivered to the club for sale at meetings. Individual subscriptions are arriving OK, so if you want to receive this magazine regularly, it looks like subscribing direct is the way to go. I'll keep you advised about any further news on this.

People occasionally ask about reset switches for the C64. Non-technical people usually just get a fastload cartridge with a built-in reset, but a button on the computer is both handy and much cheaper. The club will be offering to fit a reset button to your computer if you feel unable to cope with a soldering iron at the July meeting. It only takes a few minutes and we would be looking at a small charge for the service. Please mention if you would be interested, or just bring your 64 to the July meeting.

Our small group of Amiga users continues to be keen, even though they are vastly under-represented on the committee. The club Amiga should always be at the monthly meeting, and we will organise formal demonstrations as volunteers present themselves. If you would like to become more familiar with the Amiga, the club machine (along with most other club equipment) is available to members between meetings. Just ask a committee member.

So till next month, happy computing.

Bernie.

BETTER THAN BASIC, Part 1

For the C64

by Elaine Foster

O DEAR

This has to do with a completely different way of programming, not the Basic language I have been discussing. It isn't harder and it can open doors you wouldn't imagine. But I have an awful feeling that I'm going to regret this. Not because this is a much cuter and nicer system than Basic, but because the Boffins have made such a big and complicated thing of it. How am I going to present it simply? Well, I can only talk about it the way I feel about it. If you programming purists out there don't like it, too bad. I have a simple mind so everything comes out simplemindedly. So there!

START: DO NOT PASS GO

Well, this system is immensely faster than Basic, and if you have ever worked with a large Basic programme or lots of data or music or graphics or games you will appreciate how slow it gets. This method is also, really, no more complicated; it uses about the same number of Words, but it uses them over and over again and so it looks lengthy. It *is* long, but not very wide. Its words aren't as direct as Basic's, but they are abbreviations that are easy to understand. For example LDA means "LOAD A".

Basic allows you to put things in simple English, but that is not the language your computer speaks. It's as though you are listening to a foreign politician being translated; it goes slowly. The Basic Translator does just that, with that result. It translates PRINT into a whole lot of stuff which is in the computer's own language, which for reasons of dissimulation I shall call BTB. If you feed the computer with BTB it will purr like a kitten and run like one too. And BTB will do things that Basic never even heard·of. It has only one drawback: it is harder to debug, but there are standard ways of doing that, and if I can do it anyone can.

And what is this computer language? Numbers. How dull. But we have tricks and you never need to meet a number on a dark night, at least not right away.

The Boffins love to make long and complicated words, and they just confuse me, so I'll talk about what this thing does, and worry later about what to call things.

TOOLS

There are a few tools you will need for BTB, just as you can't see electricity unless you stick your finger into it or (preferably) you use a meter. One is a Monitor, and on our June Disk there is a beaut, called MICROMON. *BUY THE JUNE DISK IF THERE IS ANY ANY CHANCE THAT YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE THIS GREAT ADVENTURE WITH ME!* At $2 it is a pretty safe thing, not to mention all the other goodies on it. There are other gadgets, but I'll come to them later. Associated with this article should be the Instructions for Micromon. Don't worry about that they mean; it will become obvious eventually, but do copy or tear out that page for ready reference.

LIKE BASIC -- SORT-OF

OK, now, let's do some simple stuff: changing screen colours and such. Look at

these Basic programmes:

```
10 REM - POKING TO CHANGE SCREEN AND CURSOR COLOURS: RUN 20
20 POKE53281,6:REM - SCREEN COLOUR BLUE
30 POKE646,1:REM - CURSOR COLOUR WHITE
40 END
50 REM - NOW RUN 60 TO CHANGE BORDER COLOUR:
60 POKE53280,5:REM - BORDER COLOUR GREEN
70 END
100 REM - RUN 110 TO CHANGE BOTH SCREEN AND BORDER COLOURS:
110 A=53280:POKEA,1:POKEA+1,1:REM - SCREEN AND BORDER WHITE
120 POKE646,6:REM - CURSOR BLUE
130 END
150 REM - RUN 160 TO CLEAR SCREEN AND PRINT 'A' IN UPPER LEFT HAND CORNER:
160 PRINT"[clr]";:POKE1024,1:REM - PRINTS A BLUE 'A' UP THERE
170 END
180 REM - RUN 190 TO PRINT A RED 'B' NEXT TO THE 'A'
190 POKE1025,2:POKE55297,2:REM - 1025 = SCREEN POSITION 2 ETC
200 REM - 55296 = COLOUR RAM FOR THE SCREEN POSITION #1, 55297 FOR POSITION #2
210 END
220 REM - RUN230 TO FILL THE SCREEN WITH 1000 'A'S:
230 PRINT"[clr]";:FOR I=1TO1000:PRINT"A";:NEXTI
240 REM - WE ARE GOING TO GET A LOT OF MILEAGE OUT OF THESE SIMPLE ROUTINES
```

This was copied directly from disk using the method described in Exposing Basic, so it is accurate; but if you ever find an odd looking character it is because it was a [CRSR UP] or whatever (as happened at the last programme of Exposing Basic 4a).
The REMs tell most of it. That screen location 1024 is the beginning of the address which puts anything on the screen. If you poke 1 into it, an 'a' appears at the upper left corner of the screen, and so on, down to the lower right corner, one byte at a time, 1000 of them. Location 55296 governs the colour of the character at 1024, 55297 the colour at 1025 and so on. See the C64 Users Manual, pp 143-150. And p.65 for the colour codes.

RUN the various line numbers as suggested, and see what happens. Next, we'll do exactly the same thing with BTB.

NUMBERS...

But first, numbers. Well, you know how you have ten fingers so we count from 1 to 10? Well, the computer has 16 fingers and so counts from 1 to 16. It's called 'hex for hexadecimal. Don't ask me why, that's just the way the Boffins did it to torture everyone not as bright as them. Well, we only have 9 numbers, and then we go to 10. If you have 16 fingers you will run out of numbers. So, rather unimaginatively they use letters for the other numbers. 1-9 is the same, 10 is 'A', 11 is 'B', 12 is 'C', 13 is 'D', 14 is 'E' and 15 is 'F'. 16 becomes '10' just as we go to 10 when we run out of 1 to 9's. So, now we count 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 A B C D E F 10 11 12, etc to 19 1A 1B etc to 1F and then 20 and so on. How do you translate the numbers? Well, on one of the Club disks one day should appear a decimal-hex converter chart which you can print out, but it is easier to do it with the monitor.

Look, now at that Monitor page. Say you want to find out what the hex number 20 is in decimal (the usual way). You load up and RUN HI MON or LO MON, and you will

see a lot of stuff and the cursor sitting beside a dot. Enter $20 <RETURN> and the beast will tell you that that is #32 in decimal, and it will also tell you what it is in binary if that turns you on. Which is reasonable. If $10 (ie, hex 20) is decimal 16, then $20 must be 32 and so on. Enter $C000 and you get 49152. Enter #49152 and you find C000. Easy? The beast can even add and subtract hex numbers, which is quite cute. You can leave Micromon and go back to Basic anytime: just enter E or X (see chart). I always use X. To return to Micromon, enter SYS1 and you're there.

ASSEMBLY

That just means, putting things together, like Basic. Type an A and then C000 on the same line and then LDA #$06 and press <RETURN>. It will then show:

```
.> C000 A906     LDA #$06
.> C002 [cursor]
```

You have entered your first command in BTB! LDA means 'LOAD A', where A is a temporary storage box called an Accumulator; there are also similar boxes unimaginatively called X or Y. So, you have put the number 06 into box A. So far OK. Then enter STA $D021 and you will see

```
.> C002 8D 21 DO STA $D021
.> C005
```

and so on. C000, C002 and such are obviously the memory locations (in hex) where all that is happening. Don't worry what those other numbers are, except that everything is in hex. You'll get used to it. STA means 'STORE from A', so it puts that 06 into location $D021.

What does that mean? Well, move the cursor to another line and enter $C000 and it will tell you that that is memory address 49152. That is one of the free places where you can store this kind of thing. $D021 becomes 53280. Aha, does that begin to look familiar? Look at Line 20 above. That is what you have just done. See? Continue with:

```
.> C005 A9 01     LDA #$01
.> C007 8D 86 02 STA $0286
.> C00A 60        RTS
```

$0286 translates to 646; see Line 30, and 'RTS' is just 'Return to Sender' and it returns you to basic. Exit Micromon and enter SYS49152 (SYS is the way that you address your code) and you will see that you have exactly the same result as lines 20 and 30. Easy?

For several months now I have been promising myself - and Allan - that I would write up a review of LOADSTAR, which I have been getting since the beginning of the year. Every time an issue arrives I am impressed with the quality of the programs, and it takes me several hours to read through the articles, test out the games and puzzles, and look at the fonts and artwork.

For those of you who have not heard of LOADSTAR, it is a monthly disk magazine for the C64. (There is also a C128 version). It is very professionally produced, and as you can tell by the current issue number, it has been around for a long time. I have been getting two double sided disks a month for under $10.00 a month, and I consider this to be good value because almost all the material is new and original, the authors and programmers have been paid for their work, and this is not just someone distributing free public domain software. Anyway, here is my impression of Issue 131 of LOADSTAR.

The disks come with properly printed labels, which include a summary of the contents on each side. If you have two drives, you can put one disk in each and that saves a bit of disk swapping. Disk 1, side 1 is the place to start, and you just load "*",0,1 where D is the drive number. There are titles, credits, and a different picture to watch each month. This issue has a nice satellite picture drawn by Steven Wright. On my JiffyDos system the whole loading process takes 25 seconds, after which appears the main menu, and some background music plays - this month "Can Can" by Offenbach.

The whole thing is menu driven, using overlaid windows, and at most times you can hit "H" for an instant help screen. I have done some screen dumps of the menu system, but I am not sure how much room is available in the newsletter to print them. Anyway, the contents are split up into groups according to interest, and I will run through the different sections mentioning the main programs.

First of all, the LOADSTAR FILES. This is a large menu of mainly text files to read - just like a magazine on paper! There is an editorial, table of contents, letters to the editor, and articles on various subjects, even fiction and humour. One sub-heading is called LOADSTAR BRIEFS, and this ties together a number of regular utilities such as "Feedback Machine" to help you send your thoughts to the publishers, a subscription form, information for new users, a text printer (choice of different formats), a form to use when submitting material for publication, and a rather neat Contents/Directory printer, which does a two column printout of the Table of Contents, and a small four column printout of the Directories. (That is if your printer supports condensed subscript of course)!

The next menu item is called BRAINWARE. This always seems to have a puzzle page, with different background music, and in this issue there are eight crossword puzzles - not too difficult for anyone used to crosswords. The other BRAINWARE this month are "Double Deck Duo", a version of Patience, and "Mandala", a rearrange the numbers puzzle which includes a competition with the prize of LOADSTAR subscriptions.

Now we come to FUNWARE. This month, three good games. "Star Slots" is a version of what I would call a poker machine game, but with interesting rules and scoring options. "Super Mole" is a sort of puzzle really, after the style of Boulderdash. You have to position "Moles" onto "Traps" across a maze of walls and corridors. There are twenty levels on the disk, and a level maker to design your own. Lastly, there is a playable demo of the

game "DJ Puff" which is a platform game with excellent graphics and music. Of course I never seem to get very far with these, and I tend to die a lot!

The next heading is HELPWARE. This consists of just one program, a rather specialised mathematical masterpiece which may be useful to students or engineers. Can't say I remember enough maths to really follow this one, but I will list the description. It is called "Function Analyst" - a Mathematical

Function Grapher, Integrater, Differentiater, Root finder, Infinite Fourier Sum Evaluator and Statistics for the C64 !!! It plots and graphs functions of X and it does things like calculate the length of the curve and the area under the curve etc. See - its all coming back to you isn't it!!

After all that advanced maths, its just as well the next section is MUSICWARE, to sooth those shattered nerves. This is an updated version of the Loadstar music player - Music Star 11. It comes with thirty tunes transcribed by Rolfe Wagner. There are 10 jazz/blues type songs by Jelly Roll Morton, and 20 classical type songs by people like Bach, Handel, and a number of others.

Last on the menu is GEOSWARE.. This has two tutorials on GeoPublish which I am sure will help those trying to get best results from this large and sometimes complicated program, and a Geos font called Air Ad (both normal - 26 Point - and a MegaFont version). This gives letters in the style of an aircraft towing a banner, complete with a picture of an aeroplane. Of course you have to copy these fonts to a Geos work disk to use them.

The whole LOADSTAR edition, four 1541 disk sides, is integrated and linked together. Most applications have a sub-menu which asks READ IT, RUN IT, or COPY IT. There is a file copier provided to transfer useful programs to elsewhere in your collection. All programs come with instructions which can be printed out, and all have an exit choice which takes you back to the LOADSTAR main menu.

If you have any questions about LOADSTAR, or would like a sample issue to test for yourself, talk to me at a meeting. More information and subscriptions can be obtained from John Buckingham - JDB Software - PO BOX 244 WARILLA NSW 2528. This is much cheaper than subscribing direct to America.

$$$$$ PEDLAR'S CORNER $$$$$

Make yourself some money and sell your superseded computer wares at Pedlar's Corner. Bring goods to be sold along at around 7.00 pm. and pick up your money and anything left at 9.15 pm.

Please complete a form detailing the goods to be sold and the price wanted. Forms are available from Pedlar and are printed periodically in the newsletter. Please also ensure that goods are labelled with your name and the price required.

Note a commission of 10% is payable to the club.

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= AROUND AUSTRALIA WITH THE CLUBS =
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Do you know where the Commodore support is around the Australian States.
Some clubs besides having meetings for local members offer a membership for those that
wish to support the clubs by joining a club from another part of the state or even from
another state. Certainly you wont be able to attend a
meeting every month, but you will recieve a club magazine and in some cases a club disk
and you can communicate by mail to the club or members in a pen-pal type of friendship
and share your interests with others with the same interest as you.

In this column I will try to bring to you a little about some of the clubs that are
prepared to offer this type of support to you and this in turn will help that club. It may
also help your friends that use the Commodore Computer and dont know where to go for the
club support in their area as you can pass on the details to them.

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The first Club that I would like to review meets just over the Victorian border in
Albury in New South Wales. The ALBURY/WODONGA COMMODORE USER GROUP INC
(NSW) was established in 1983. In the peak of the C64s popularity members totaled more
than 110. Today, in the mid-1990s membership is considerably less but they are still going
strong. They cater for both 64/128 and Amiga user. In 1994 the clubs membership
expanded to include areas outside the border area and now caters for members from South
Eastern Region of Australia, I.E. Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

Over the years the group has acquired a considerable amount of computer equipment
which is used at the monthly meetings and is also made available to members for hire, on a
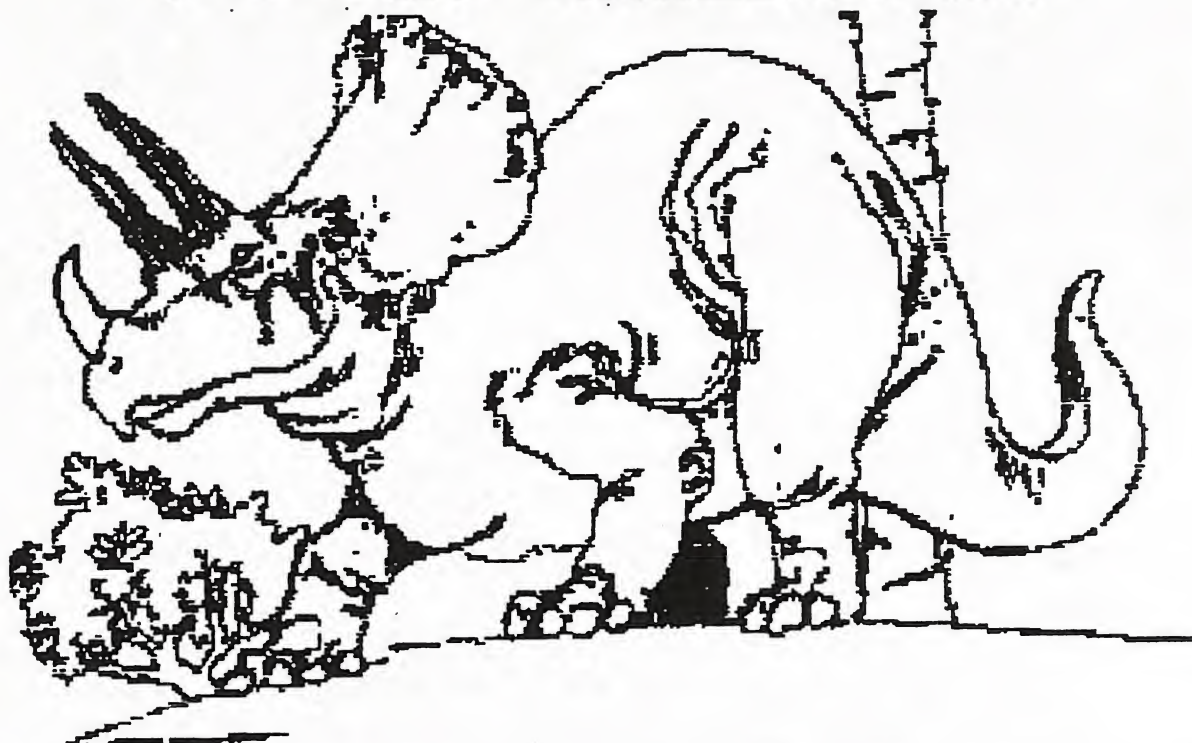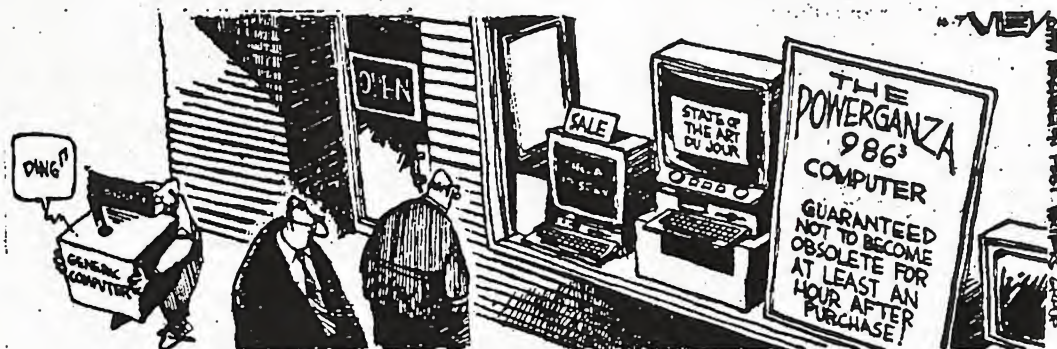monthly basis, at a small fee.

The club publishes a monthly newsletter (called Borderline) which the members
collect from the monthly meetings or have mailed out to them. The club meets on the first
Tuesday of each month (except January) at the Gas and Fuel Building , corner of Hume
and Townsend Streets in albury. Meetings commence at 7.30pm and the format is very
informal.

Benifits of being a club member are access to the groups library of books and
magazines. A PD library of software at $2.00 per D/S disk or bring your own disk and get it
for $1.00. Blank disks available for sale. Rent the
club equipment. Monthly newsletter. Monthly meetings. Friendly help.

Just where do you find all this....

Albury/Wodonga Commodore User Group Inc (NSW)

P.O. BOX 1014. Albury. NSW. 2640

NON SEQUITUR by Wiley

Dealer Directory

Micromon Instructions

by Elaine Foster

At the June meeting I am planning to give an extremely interesting and important talk , "Something Better Than Basic" , which will introduce a subject people think very complicated but you will see that it is realy very simple , and endlessly fascinating . In fact it is even more interesting than Basic , and I know you'll like it .

But you will want to bring this issue of the Newsletter with you to the June Meeting , and turn to this page . Here are the abbreviated instructions for the Micromon programmes included on the June Club Disk ("LO MONITOR" and "HI MONITOR") . BUY IT ! please ? These may look silly now , but wait for the great enlightenment !

The commands are at the left , then the function and the item in italics is a typical example :

A Simple assemble .	*.A 2000 LDA #$12:LOADS $12 TO A*
B Break set .	*.B 1000 00FF*
C Compare memary	*.C 1000 2000 C000*
D Disassembler .	*.D 2000 3000*
E Exit Micromon* .	*.E*
F Fill memory .	*.F 1000 1100 FF*
G Go run .	*.G 1000*

4096 or the HI MON is at 49152 .

*To reenter Micromon after exitting , SYS1 (or 2 or 3) . But to reenter after resetting the computer , SYS BA , where BA is the Beginning Address (4096 or 49152).

All of this will become blindingly clear in due course

PEDLAR'S CORNER

ITEM/PRICE SHEET

1. Commission: 10% to a maximum of $10-00 per item.
2. Please label goods with your initials, item number and price, and have list ready prior to meeting.
3. Item description: T=Tape, C=Cartridge, B=Book, H=Hardware

MEMBER NAME _____

ITEM NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	CLUB COMMISSION	MEMBERS PAYMENT
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
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9.				
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11.				
12.				
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14.				
15.				

ADVERTISEMENT FORM
FOR SALE, SWAP, WANTED

_____

_____

_____

MEMBER DETAILS (not for publication)

Name_____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Membership Number _____

Screen 1: THE CRUCIVERBALIST

```
THE CRUCIVERBALIST

DISH CHAMP SHOK        F1=TOGGLE CRSR
ROPE HOMER TAXI        F3=SAVE PUZZLE
ITAL ALINE RIEN        F5=LETTER HINT
PAMPERED THORNS        F7=CHECK SOLN
   LETS SEEK
BAGELS DISSECTS        F2=SEE SOLN
ODES  HINTS LIP        F4=LOAD OLD
ADES GONGS AONE        F6=CLEAR GRID
RES SLATS  CAGE        F8=EXIT
DREAMERS BACKED
   SEED SERE           CONTROL S=MUSIC
LAPSES SCAMPERS
ISLE OCEAN TAUT        CURSOR ACROSS
NEAT MARDI ESSE
EATS ERASE DEEP

A: SIDE --

D: DULL PERSON (SL.)
```

Screen 2: LOADSTAR — SATELLITE OF LOVE
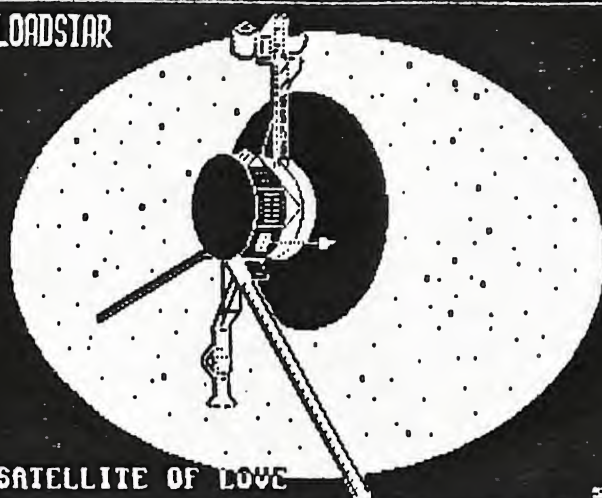
LOADSTAR

SATELLITE OF LOVE

Screen 3: LOADSTAR 131

```
The Loadstar Files

   Brainware

   Funware

   Helpware

   Musicware

   Geosware


ALL THE FILES THAT WE MAKE FIT
Drive:8    Press H for Help    Side # 1
```

Screen 4: LOADSTAR 131

```
                The Loadstar Files
   Brainwar    Diskovery
               Soapbox
   Funware     Table Of Contents
               Credits/Warranty
   Helpware    LOADSTAR Forum
               LOADSTAR Briefs
   Musicwar    Basics: Tokens
               Bytes: HR Skeleton
   Geosware    Bits: Menu Toolbox I
               Menu Toolbox II
               Menu Toolbox Demo
               Ars Magna: A Story
               Newsletter Nanished
               Close This Menu

A QUICK LOOK AT THIS MONTH'S FEATURES
Drive:8    Press H for Help    Side # 1
```

Screen 5: LOADSTAR 131

```
The Loadstar        Funware
   Brainwar    Star Slots
               Super Mole
                              e
   He   DJ Puff Demo Game

   Mu   Read It
        Run It
   Ge   Copy It
        Close This Menu


BOUNCING AND FLAMING IS A LOTTA FUN
Drive:8    Press H for Help    Side # 3
```

Screen 6: PUFF

DJ PUFF'S VOLCANTIC CAPERS
CODED BY DUNCAN SCOTT KERSHAW
MUSIC BY GERARD GOURLEY
GRAPHICS BY JONATHAN SMYTH
COPYRIGHT 1992 CODEMASTERS LTD.

SCORE:000000   EXTRA

HERE ARE THE WORDS I'VE HIDDEN

APPEND
AUTOFILE
BLOCK
CALENDAR
COMMODORE
COMPUTER
CRUNCH
DELETE
DENSITY
DOUBLE
GEOCLUB
LOADER
MAKER
MENU
MONITOR
NETWORK
PRINTER
RETURN
SOLUTION
VIDEO

```
H R P V I D E O I D E L E T E L Q E G
N A R J Z C O M M O D O R E D V A I E
O D I O H E R R K D H M Z W Q A V M R
I N N H D C E D E K E G E O C L U B O
T E T C O Y K N L T C N Y T K B N O T
U L E N U K A E K O U O S Y N X B Q I
L A R U B F M P P C A P L I G D R Y N
O C M R L W Q P E O K D M B T N M A Q
S Z V C E N T A U N E M E O W Y Z T M
R E L I F O T U A G A U Y R C D F T B
U N E T W O R K N R U T E R B A N E Z
```

Melbourne Commodore Computer Club Inc.

If undeliverable return to:
P.O. Box 177,
BOX HILL, Vic. 3128.